

HIS BEATITUDE VISITS BENGHAZI IN LIBYA

On 25th October 2008, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, flew to Benghazi in Libya, accompanied by His Eminence Theofylaktos of Tripoli, His Grace Gabriel of Mareotis, Archimandrite Savvas Heimonettos, His Excellency the Ambassador of Greece in Libya Mr Alexios Pavlos Stephanou, the Honourable Consul General of Greece in Tripoli and the representative of the Greek Community of Tripoli.

At the Airport in Benghazi , His Beatitude was welcomed by the Chairman and the Vice Chairman of the Hellenic Community of Benghazi, the clergy and the Christian faithful.

His Beatitude immediately visited the Greek schools. He then attended an official lunch hosted in his honour by the Hellenic Community of Benghazi, during which commemorative gifts were exchanged. His Beatitude held warm discussions with the Honourable Consul General of Turkey who attended the lunch.

His Beatitude and his entourage then went on to the town of Sousa , 250 kilometres from Benghazi , where they rested at the Hotel Almanara.

On 26th October 2008, His Beatitude accompanied by the Chargé d' Affaires of the Greek Embassy in Egypt , was taken on a conducted tour by the Professor of Archaeology Dr. Fantel Adi, iof ancient Apollonia, one of the five towns of Cyrenean Pentapolis, the Sculpture museum of Cyrenean art, the temple of Zeus and ancient Cyrene which His Beatitude looked at in great emotion, as during the beginning of his tenure as bishop (1990), he bore the title of this town. The Professor then

hosted a lunch following which His Beatitude returned to Benghazi .

Finally, on the evening of the same day, His Excellency the Greek Ambassador in Libya, Mr Alxios Paul Stephanou, hosted a dinner in a central hotel in the city in honour of His Beatitude, which was attended by all the Consuls General in Benghazi, the representatives of local civil and military authorities and many other dignitaries. Addressing those present, His Beatitude thanked all for the kindness and hospitality shown, which is proof of the respect and honour held for the Patriarchal Throne of St Mark and especially to the Leader of the country, His Excellency Mr Mouamar Kaddafi. He also expressed the gratitude of the Church of Alexandria to Egypt and to His Excellency Mr Hosni Mubarak, addressing the Honourable Consul General of Egypt in Benghazi .