

HIS BEATITUDE VISITS THE HOLY ARCHBISHOPRIC OF CYPRUS AND THE HOLY METROPOLIS OF KYRENEIA

On the afternoon of 13th March 2008 His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, was warmly welcomed by the clergy and the people of Nicosia on his arrival at the Archbishopric of Cyprus.

His Beatitude was met in the forecourt of the Holy Archbishopric by His Beatitude Chrysostomos II of All Cyprus, together with the members of the Holy Synod, while scholars of the Pan-Cypriot High School of Nicosia, dressed in the national costumes of Cyprus , scattered rose petals. The group then made its way to the Cathedral of St John the Theologian and conducted a doxology.

Addressing His Beatitude, the Archbishop said that: "the Church of Cyprus rejoices and is glad on this day, for it has the great honour of welcoming the Primate of the ancient Patriarchate of Alexandria". "In your person, Holy Brother, we welcome all the hierarchs and clergy of your ancient Patriarchate as well as all the Christians of your Church".

The Archbishop spoke of the Missionary work of the Patriarchate in Africa, saying: "We admire your efforts, which Orthodoxy has undertaken on the Dark Continent, under your inspired guidance, in order to bring to everyone everywhere the redeeming and life-giving messages of Christianity to the shepherdless flock of the Lord"

"In honouring Your Beatitude, we honour the two thousand year old history of the second Throne Patriarchate of

Orthodoxy. We honour the saints and martyrs who shone through their Christian virtues and gave the message of the Crucified and Risen Christ”.

Archbishop Chrysostomos spoke of the current situation of the Church of Cyprus which “is in a state of spiritual ascent. Recently there have been historic ecclesiastical events, which have already changed its future path for the better. Four new Metropolises have been re-opened as well as two diocese and the Autocephalous Church of Cyprus has a full and canonical Synod” :In this was we are much closer to our flock and are able to better guide it, both in the spiritual department and in our national problems which seriously affects and saddens us”. Finally, he wished His Beatitude a pleasant, joyful and fruitful visit.

In his reply, His Beatitude referred to the old ethos of these conciliatory visits, saying that it is within these parameters that he hastened to “powerfully announce the lengthy unblemished ties of our two Churches”.

The Alexandrian Patriarch went on to mention the “great responsibility of evangelizing the African people and we feel the prayers of the Cypriot Church ” asking for these prayers to be strengthened.

“We want you to know that we also ceaselessly pray to the Lord Jesus Christ, His All Holy Virgin Mother and all the Saints, for an immediate and just solution to the well-known problem and the unification of divided Cyprus . I pray from the depths of my heart that these days will be days full of the Lord’s grace and the beginning of a new period between our two Churches”.

Following the doxology and the speeches, His Beatitude Theodoros II and his entourage, together with the Archbishop of Cyprus and the members of the Holy Synod walked together to the Great Synodal Hall and received the wishes of the clergy

and the people.

His Beatitude visits the Holy Metropolis of Kyreneia

His Beatitude and his entourage were afforded a warm welcome also at the Holy Church of the Apostle Andrew, temporary Cathedral at Platy Aglantzias in Nicosia , which was their next stop. The Alexandrian Patriarch was welcomed by metropolitan Paul of Kyreneia, the city officials and displaced residents of the city.

Addressing Patriarch Theodoros following the doxology, the Metropolitan of Kyreneia stressed that: unfortunately we are not able to have the joy of welcoming you at the Cathedral of the Archangel Michael, our permanent see, in beautiful Kyreneia, the diamond of Cyprus ”.

“The destruction of our religious and cultural heritage and the ethnic cleansing have changed the demographic character of the occupied lands, uprooted our faith and destroyed the Greek Orthodox tradition of our homeland. We have repeatedly reported the atrocity and brutality of the Turks. IN the current trend of universality foreign centres have taken decisions and continue to plan the adulteration of our cultural and ethnic identity, so that Orthodox consciousness is weakened and the Hellenic personality of our people is changed”.

“The un-enslaved Greek Cypriot people once again proclaim their Orthodox faith, and their desire to not bow to pressures, to not give in to shameful solutions, not to bend, but to stand strong and to struggle to verify the fate of those missing, to change the effects of the Turkish invasion and to get a European solution which will be subject to International Law and will conform to human rights”.

In ending, he said: “Pray that we will be deemed worthy to experience the joy of liberation and true reunification of Cyprus ”.

In his reply, His Beatitude said: “firstly our hearts and minds wing toward the beautiful and enslaved Kyreneia and from the depths of our soul we pray that soon you will be able to enjoy its liberation together with your displaced flock and then work to develop it to its previous beauty”.

“We honour and praise your efforts for the restoration of your flock to their paternal land and we ask the Lord to give you courage to continue to keep the flame burning”. He hoped that on his next visit they would celebrate in Kyreneia and that it would be soon.

His Beatitude gave His Eminence a pastoral staff “to lean on in the difficult hours and to walk to the land of Kyreneia”.

In the eveing, His Beatitude officiated at the Cathedral of the Apostle John in Nicosia at the service of the First Salutations to the Theotokos.