

# **HIS BEATITUDE VISITS THE HOLY MONASTERIES OF MAHAIRAS AND ST ERAKLIDIUS**

**On Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2008, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, visited the Holy Monasteries of Mahairas and St Eraklidius.**

At Mahairas His Beatitude was met by the Hegumen, His Eminence Metropolitan Epiphаний of Lydra and the brothers of the Monastery.

Speaking directly after the prayers, His Beatitude said: this most holy and venerable Monastery was always a place of evangelical virtue, a permanent lamp, a place of pure and ceaseless prayer, a place where piety is taught, as is love to all those who pray, and a protector of visible and invisible enemies, and of saints.....We bless and praise the brothers of this Holy Monastery because they chose as their place of prayer, enlightenment and theosis this holy place, making themselves willingly expectors of the Lady Theotokos of Mahairas, the powerful proof of the glorious history and tradition of the Monasteries.

"We thank you from our hart for the welcome and other functions of honour and respect to my humble person and my entourage and we pray that the All Holy Virgin will protect, bless, keep, and sanctify this venerable monastery always, and all the brotherhood therein".

His Beatitude made special mention of his predecessor Patriarch Petros VII who came from the Monastery of Mahairas as well as of Archimandrite Arsenios, Hegumen of the Holy Monastery, who was killed together with Patriarch Petros.

Before he departed from the Monastery, the Alexandrian Primate laid a wreath at the statue of the hero Gregory Afxentiou who fell in the struggle, becoming a sacrifice for the freedom of Cyprus during the EOKA struggles.

**The next stop for His Beatitude was the monastery of St Herakleidos** where he was welcomed by the Abbess Prodromi and the sisters of the Monastery.

In his address, His Beatitude said that “coming from faithful Egypt, holy Libya and the chosen Thebaid”, where monks and saints were bred, the see of the second throne Patriarchate of Alexandria, we paternally congratulate you because you walk in great joy the monastic path which you willingly chose. On this difficult road, you have with you on your journey the protector of this Holy Monastery St Heraklidios as you live right next to his tomb”.

He ended saying: “You have as your assistance the prayers of all the predecessors and holy fathers who have lived as monastics in this land”.