

HIS BEATITUDE VISITS THE MASAI TRIBE

On 2nd June 2009, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa was welcomed in Ewaso, 30km from Nairobi , by the Masai of Kenya in their traditional dress and songs.

It was the first visit by the Venerable Primate of the Church of Alexandria to the Masai, to the land of this tribe where there are five Orthodox parish Communities, four of which are at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro.

It is a fact that the Orthodox Masai maintain their customs and habits. Besides, they were urged to continue this when he met them in their village: "You must always remember to keep your traditions, your customs and habits". Addressing the youth, he stressed that :these youngsters are the future of their country and from them Orthodoxy also expects much".

It is worth noting that the Orthodox Church in the area stands by the Masai who in the past 30 years have embraced Christianity, due largely to the efforts of the local Metropolitan Makarios, whom he thanked publicly for his efforts. Among his initiatives, were the translation of the Divine Liturgy and all other services in the language of the Masai, so that they too can live the liturgical life in their own language. He has also provided bursaries , created a school and a clinic.

There are also young Masai who are enrolled at the Patriarchal Seminary "Archbishop Makarios III" in Nairobi , preparing to become the future leaders of the Church.

As a small support to their families, His Beatitude donated foodstuffs, clothing and toys for the children.

The welcome ended with traditional dances and songs of the Masai tribe, who gave the Alexandrian Primate their tribal scepter to thank him for the visit.

His Beatitude then immediately returned to Nairobi , continuing his pastoral journey in Kenya . This will culminate on Sunday with the celebrations for the fifty-year anniversary of the Metropolis of Kenya.