

HIS BEATITUDE VISITS THE RUSSIAN COMMUNITY OF SOUTH AFRICA AND THE EMBASSY OF EGYPT

On 29th March 2010, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, together with His Eminence Seraphim Metropolitan of Johannesburg and Pretoria and Archimandrite Panteleimon Arathymos, Director of the Private patriarchal Office, visited the Russian Community of St Sergios South Africa.

His Beatitude was welcomed by the Parish Priest Protopresbyter Daniel Lukovoy, their Excellencies the Ambassadors of Russia Mr. Anatoli Makarov, Romania Mr Radu Safta, Bulgaria Mr. Bolokia Nekov, Serbia Mr. Goran Butzisk, Ukraine Mr. Valery Hrebenuk, Belarus Mr. Alexei Lesnoy and the Consul General of Cyprus Ms Elena Christoforou.

The doxology was sung immediately in the church of St Sergios as well as a memorial service for the very recent terror attacks in Moscow, and Father DANIEL ADDRESSED His Beatitude emphasizing the blessing of this visit and the centuries old relations between the Churches of Alexandria and Russia.

He then gave a pastoral staff to His Beatitude who in his reply also spoke of the historic bonds of friendship between the two Patriarchates and people of Greece and Russia, the joy at the visit of the upcoming visit of His Beatitude Kyril Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia to the Church of Alexandria, his past meeting with His Excellency the President of Russia Mr Medvedev in Cairo, and the good work of the

Parish of St Sergios in South Africa under the omophorion of His Eminence Seraphim. He then gave a blessing Cross to the Parish Church.

A reception followed in the adjacent hall where His Beatitude was addressed by the Ambassador of Russia Mr. Makarov and the Chairman of the Russian Community.

His Beatitude then went to the Egyptian Embassy in Pretoria where he was welcomed by His Excellency the Ambassador of Egypt Dr Mohamed Zayet, together with His Eminence Markos of the Coptic Church in South Africa, their Excellencies the Ambassador of Greece in South Africa Mr Spyridon Theoharopoulos, Serbia Mr. Goran Boutzisik, the Consul of Cyprus Ms Elena Christoforou and Mr Baladakis, Chairman of the Officers of the Throne in South Africa.

Dr Zayet who hosted an official lunch in honour of His Beatitude, expressed his joy at the visit of the Venerable patriarch of the ancient Patriarchate and spoke of the peaceful coexistence of the people and faithful of the two great religions, Christianity and Muslims in hospitable Egypt.

After thanking the Egyptian Ambassador for the honour and the lunch, His Beatitude prayed for the health of His Excellency President Hosni Mubarak and the prosperity of the Egyptian people. He also spoke of the friendship and co-operation between the people of Greece and Egypt and of the missionary, spiritual and humanistic service of the Church of Alexandria in Africa. Commemorative gifts were then exchanged.