

INAUGURATION OF THE PATRIARCHAL CENTER FOR STUDIES AND DIALOGUE IN THE ROTUNDA OF THE EAST

The vision of His Beatitude, the Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, for the creation of an area of interfaith and inter-Christian dialogue, became a reality with the inauguration of the **Patriarchal Center for Studies and Dialogue** at the Patriarchal Monastery of St. George.

On the 6th of November His Beatitude Theodoros II Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa officiated during the Divine Liturgy at the Church of the Holy Patriarchal Monastery of Agios Georgios in Old Cairo.

Their Eminences the Metropolitans George of Guinea and Nikolaos of Ermopolis were present and the Divine Liturgy was served by the Abbot of the Holy Patriarchal Monastery of St George Cairo, Archimandrite Archimandrite Damaskinos Al Azrai.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, the Alexandrian Primate placed the lamp on its stand, to "*shine on all who are in the house*" (Matt. 5:15), performing the official opening of the Patriarchal Center for Studies and Dialogue, which is housed in a renovated area of the Patriarchal Monastery of Agios Georgios.

The Patriarchal Center for Studies and Dialogue is the result of the vision of His Beatitude, the efforts of the Abbot of the Holy Patriarchal Monastery, but also of his colleagues, who, under the wise guidance of the Patriarch, worked hard for its completion and operation.

This great event of the inauguration was honored by the

presence of Their the Metropolitans George of Guinea and Nikolaos of Ermoupolis, representatives of other denominations and denominations such as Catholics, Anglican Copts and the Grand Mufti of Azgar, but also representatives of the Embassy, Consulate and Community of Greece in Cairo.

The Abbot of the Monastery, Fr. Damaskinos, in his address, gave the assurance that the Patriarchal Center will contribute in practice to the interfaith and inter-Christian dialogue in Egypt, while emphasizing once again the unwavering care and love of the Primate of the African Continent for the Patriarchal Monastery of St. George.

"It is a special blessing, a special honor and a bright spot in the modern history of the Holy Patriarchal and God-walked Monastery of St George in Old Cairo, that the Most Holy Theotokos chose to establish a Center for Studies and Dialogue here, in the Monastery that you love so much and that the grace of God considered you worthy through Your tireless care, diligence and vision to engrave your Venerable name in golden letters in the choirs of the Founders of the Holy Monastery, as the Great radical renovator of the Great Rotunda of the East during the twenty-first century".

Also, the Very Reverend did not fail to thank the group of volunteers from different countries of the world, which is the main core of the Center's collaborators and has already started working with the main goal of promoting the Saints and the pilgrimages of the Alexandrian Throne.

His Beatitude, in his reply, particularly moved, first thanked Holy God for the great blessing he reserved for him with the inauguration of the current Center for Studies and Dialogue. He also thanked all the people who in a dignified manner attended this humble event, especially the representatives of religions and denominations because, as he said today, from Egypt they give the message of unity between peoples.

In addition, the Primate of Alexandria dedicated the Lecture and Meeting Room of the Center for Studies and Dialogue to the late much-lamented Patriarch Petros VII, thus wanting to honor the memory of his blessed Predecessor.

He stated characteristically: *"The main building is the Church of St. George and right next it is this beautiful building, in which another Patriarch, my predecessor Petros, wanted to build something that would unite the people, so this room here I dedicate with all my heart to my predecessor, in eternal memory of Petros VII"*.

In addition, His Beatitude thanked the Abbot of the Monastery Archimandrite Damaskinos who, as the Patriarch stressed, worked hard and realized one of the visions of the Alexandrian Primate.

Finally, His Beatitude stressed that the Center for Studies and Dialogue was created for the youth whose progress will be followed, while expressing the hope that this academy will help make the world better and brighter.

"A week ago I came back from a long trip to Africa. My eyes saw through Lake Victoria, the Indian Ocean thousands of people and then I realized how important it is for a person to see their fellow man's face, to hold his hand, to meet their eyes, to open their hearts and see the smile on their faces. There are no unsolvable problems, we will find the solutions for everything, only kindness is needed. So, I dedicate this academy to the young children and I will be happy when I see the progress of these children, hoping that our academy will also place a tiny pebble so that the world can become a slightly better place, a little brighter, much happier".

At the end of this historic event, a documentary was presented on the history of the Monastery of St George, which is the first effort of the Center for Studies and Dialogue of the Patriarchate of Alexandria.