

## **LAYING OF THE FOUNDATION STONE OF THE EXARCHATE OF THE PATRIARCHATE OF ALEXANDRIA IN CYPRUS**

The historic bonds which bind the Church of Alexandria with the Church of Cyprus, have become tighter from today, Thursday 11 December 2014, as this morning His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa and His Beatitude Chrysostomos II, Archbishop of New Justiniane and All Cyprus, laid the foundation stone of the Exarchate of the Patriarchate in the Geri area in Nicosia. The Service of the Sanctification of the Waters preceded conducted by the two Primates in the presence of the Minister of Justice Mr. Jonas Nikolaou, who was also representing the President of the Republic of Cyprus, the Maronite Archbishop, the Exarch of the Jerusalem Patriarchate Metropolitan Timothy of Vostros, Metropolitan Makarios of Kenya and Metropolitan George of Guinea, the Mayor of Geri, the Ambassador of Egypt, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs Erato Markouli, the representative of the Greek Embassy, the Chairman of the Office Bearers of the Patriarchate Professor Theodoros Panagopoulos, politicians, military officials, and security forces, businessmen, many people and the pupils of the schools in the area.

The foundation stone was laid by the two Primates together with the Minister of Justice and the Mayor of Geri. In his address the Patriarch expressed his great emotion at the historic moment and warmly thanked the archbishop of Cyprus who gave permission and his blessing for construction to begin; its aim is among other things to also support the local community through the community clinics which will be included in the building complex. He also thanked all who had contributed to the accomplishment of the aim, expressing particular gratitude to the former President of Cyprus Mr. Dimitri Christofias, as it was during his presidential tenure that the 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> land was donated to the Patriarchate, as well as to President Nikos Anastasiades for supporting the entire project, while also wishing him a speedy recovery and a quick return to his country.

Addresses were given by the Archbishop of Cyprus, who spoke of the God-loved efforts of the Patriarchate in Africa, the Minister of Justice and the Mayor of Geri, who clearly emotionally assured the Patriarch that he will support the work with all his strength.

The 'Leandros Sitaros' choir sang ecclesiastical hymns and during the Sanctification service the choir of the 'Apostolos Barnabas' Seminary of Cyprus sang. The beautiful ceremony ended with the singing of the National Anthem.

Coordinator of the entire event was Reverend Father Athinodoros Papaevripiades, the Patriarch's Representative in Cyprus.