

## **MISSIONARY PILGRIMAGE BY HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA TO LUBUMBASHI IN THE CONGO**

**In the afternoon of Thursday, March 23, 2023, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and all Africa, arrived in Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, in order to carry out a six-day Patriarchal visit to the country where the heart of Orthodoxy has been beating for many decades.**

At the international airport the Alexandrian Primate, who is accompanied by His Eminence Nicodemus Metropolitan of Memphis, Patriarchal Commissioner of Cairo and the Very Reverend Archimandrite Theodoros Mutombo, were received with all solemnity and honor by the local Metropolitan, His Eminence Meletios of Katanga, as well as His Grace Cosmas Bishop of Konstantiani, Her Excellency the Ambassador of Greece to Kinshasa Mrs. Kalliops Ntouti, the Honourable Consul General of Greece Mr. Gerasimos Dounis, the Honourable Secretary General of Hellenism Abroad and Public Diplomacy Mr. Ioannis Chrysoulakis, the Honourable President of the Greek Community of Lubumbashi Mr. Georgios Psarommatis and local clergy.

This was followed by the celebration of the Doxology upon the arrival of the His Beatitude at the Holy Cathedral of the Annunciation of the Theotokos, before the end of which His Eminence the Metropolitan of Katanga welcomed the venerable Primate, expressing grateful thanks for His visit, in order to celebrate the anniversary of the completion of 100 years since the foundation of the Lubumbashi Hellenic Community and 50 years since the arrival of the first missionary echelon in the wider area of Kolwezi.

In his reply, His Beatitude expressed his joyous feelings on this his third consecutive official visit to Lubumbashi, Katanga, commemorating his first arrival in the city in the year 2012. He also heartily thanked His Eminence Metropolitan Meletios and all those present for the warm welcome, especially the President Mr. George Psarommatis and the members of the Greek Community of Lubumbashi for their kind invitation.

A meeting then took place between His Beatitude the Patriarch with the holy clergy of the local Church (93 clergy), during which paternal advice, counsel and pastoral suggestions regarding their missionary activities were given.

**His Beatitude emphasized in particular that all the indigenous clergy of Africa are, as he said,** “the spiritual and genuine children of our senior Patriarchate, whom this Apostolic Throne, with its uninterrupted two-thousand-year journey of martyrdom since 35 AD, the year of illumination of the City of Alexander the Great, from the Apostle and Evangelist Mark, until today, he endeavored to train and highlight its local staff in the midst of many difficulties, sacrificial offerings, deprivations, and even manpower shortages. But it offered them unstinting affection, patience and understanding towards the local attitudes and traditions of the tribal world, crowned with unfailing love, absolute love that reached even the death of ardent Greek missionaries, so that this vine would bear fruit..

Therefore, all the African clergy, as well as those of the local Church of Katanga, can boast in the Lord because they received their holy baptism, their spiritual training and their valid and canonical ordination from this ancient Church, the only active ecclesiastical organization on the African continent for two millennia, oldest in time of all its fifty-four states, whom I call on to continue undisturbed to minister to their homelands, ignoring the contemporary spiritual Cyclops and Laestrygonians, who seek to bring about, by means of silver, temporary promises, falsehoods and slanders, the accursed disintegration of the robe of our Lord Jesus Christ in Africa, the one who forgives every error and sin, except ingratitude”.

It is noted that for the present Patriarchal visit to the Holy Metropolis of Katanga, the neighboring Metropolitans Theodosios of Kinshasa and Hariton of Kananga, as well as the Very Reverend Archimandrite Polycarpos Diamantopoulos, Patriarchal Vicar of the Holy Diocese of Kisangani and Fr. Timotheos Tumba, Patriarchal Vicar of the Holy Diocese of Goma.