

PASTORAL TOUR TO THE ISLAND OF MADAGASCAR BY HIS BEATITUDE THEODOROS II, PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA AND ALL AFRICA.

His Beatitude arrived at the Antananarivo International Airport in the capital of Madagascar, early in the afternoon. His Beatitude was welcomed at the airport by the Honourable Consul General of Greece and Cyprus in Madagascar, Mr. Panagiotis Touloumis, His Excellency the Ambassador of Egypt to Madagascar Mr. Usama Khalil, as well as diplomats from the Ministry of the Interior representing the President of the Republic of Madagascar, Mr. Andry Rajoelina.

The local Metropolitan, His Eminence Ignatios of Antananarivo and Northern Madagascar together with His Grace Prodhomos Bishop of Toliara and Southern Madagascar, the clergy and the faithful people of God warmly welcomed the Alexandrian Primate.

They arrived at the Metropolitan Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Antananarivo by motorcade, where the Doxology was chanted, with the participation of all the clergy as well as delegations from all the Parishes of the Capital. At the end of the Service, His Beatitude expressed his joy because after seven years God had called him to visit the blessed island of Madagascar again. He called on the faithful, clergy and people to remain faithful to the church from which they received Holy Baptism and the clergy received their ordination, the Ancient Patriarchate of Alexandria.

He spoke to the believers about the great Feast of the

Nativity of the Theotokos and, taking the opportunity from the person of the Virgin Mary, he spoke about every simple mother in Madagascar who with great difficulty raises her children in adverse conditions. These simple mothers deserve honor and respect, emphasized His Beatitude. His Eminence Ignatios, Metropolitan of Antananarivo and Northern Madagascar, expressing the feelings of the entire local Church, thanked His Beatitude for His visit, made a brief review of the spiritual and charitable work of the Holy Metropolis and finally asked for the blessing of the Patriarch for the continuation of the work of the church for the glory of God and the spiritual benefit of the faithful.

Finally, in an atmosphere of joy and enthusiasm, the Patriarch left the Holy Church to continue his missionary tour tomorrow in the holy Diocese of Toliara and South Madagascar.