

# **PATRIARCHAL DIVINE LITURGY AT THE CATHEDRAL IN SIERRA LEONE**

**A great event for the Holy Diocese of Sierra Leone was the first Patriarchal Divine Liturgy** conducted by His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa on 24th February 2012 at the Cathedral of St Eleftherios in the capital of Sierra Leone, the country which is being reborn from the ruins of the civil war.

Participating in the Divine Liturgy were His Eminence George Metropolitan of Accra, the Very Reverend Archimandrite Themistocles Adamopoulos and the local clergy. During the Divine Liturgy His Beatitude ordained to the Diaconate the Catechist Markos. Addressing the large congregation and the hundreds of children, he called on everyone to forget the divisions and the tragic results of the civil war and to look to the future with optimism and a great love for God and fellow man; he congratulated Father Themistocles for the multifaceted work which he is doing in the country and asked of the local authorities to always assist his efforts to contribute to the reconstruction of the country through the support programmes of education and health.

After the Divine Liturgy His Beatitude the Patriarch conducted the inauguration of the first Orthodox School which was built in the enormous grounds of the Cathedral which dominates the centre of the city. He was welcomed there by students who are at the school. During the ceremony of the inauguration His Beatitude thanked the Brotherhood of Orthodox External Missions in Thessaloniki which was responsible for the building of the Cathedral and the School, congratulated the Headmistress and the teaching staff on their work and prayed that this model school will be only the beginning of the great contribution of the Alexandrian Church to the teaching of the young people in Sierra Leone. The children of

the nursery school, primary and high schools presented a festive programme and gave symbolic gifts to His Beatitude. The Alexandrian Primate was visibly moved as he watched the children and then distributed stationery to them all. A particularly moving moment came when all 1800 children sang the national anthem of their country.