

# **“I WAS ALSO THERE, AT THE RENOVATION OF THE ROTONDA IN CAIRO”**

(By His Eminence Anthimos Metropolitan of Alexandropolis)

From Evros,  
where the rivers join  
and open up into the delta,  
we came, the bishops  
where “an old god and a road  
and a donor and a judge”  
brings the bowels of Epirus  
to the Mediterranean and calls  
from its gates, like another Macedonian,  
that we cross.

The first Pope invited us  
to enjoy his creative breath,  
as this gave breath to something old,  
but also new, which is being  
born.

In Pharaonic boulders  
Rome had enthroned its power  
and then came faith  
which covered the tower with a  
Church rotunda secured there  
The corner-stone of the confession  
of the Trophy bearer.

And they came,  
the enemies of the Nazarene,  
waves of conquerors  
and the tamer of all,  
and they tarnished everything.  
Beacon guides few  
kept the importance of the place  
the frozen fingers  
even without the rings.

And the Patriarch,  
transformed the impossible dream  
into truth,  
with people who encapsulated  
their wealth in Faith  
and offered it  
as incense in worship.

And the dream became a vision  
And the vision reality:  
a rotunda of the east,  
A monument to civilizations,  
The hope of religions  
(The last for coexistence),  
A technical achievement,  
A course for the millennia,

but most of all, (alas so far),  
the testimony of a people  
which gave civilization,  
symbolisms and hope.

The Cross, the Word urged  
Him, whom tradition  
prolifically named  
judge of the world  
to come, as a divine gift,  
to grant, to give of himself  
to countries, to people and to their cultures.

Not to judge,  
but to wash...feet,  
to wipe away tears, to sow hope, joy,  
and meaning,  
to proclaim the message  
of a different way of life, to those  
who even this one is unbearable.

Everyone rejoiced, all marvelled,  
praised, but Theodore's II,  
was flying in joy. Yes, he was not treading  
on the Rotunda in Cairo.  
He was spinning in the past,  
he was experiencing it in the present,  
He witnessed it from the future.

He was bothered neither by the shouts  
of the muezzin, nor by the ignorant  
passers-by, who gazed cluelessly  
and passed by.

He was not counting his own, but  
everyone, all who passed, those there and those  
who would perhaps attend tomorrow.  
The Patriarch counted, watched,  
laughed and flew through the Egyptian sky.

He became again,  
The Shepherd of shepherds,  
Father of fathers, Archpriest of archpriests.  
He was there, to minister  
with so many bishops (weak,  
like all of us, in our time),  
with titles coming from afar,  
old states which once were  
brilliant, ancient colonies  
which in their years lit the darkness,  
seasons which forever adorned  
civilization, and even  
from cloisters, monasteries, dioceses  
which carved out their tracks  
deeply in the course of the Church.

And we remembered, the time that the Pope

Would write notes of peace  
To tall the bishops in the world,  
about full moons and equinoxes  
For the common celebration of  
Pascha for Christians.  
A celebration that resurrects  
all the fallen and the dead,  
a sign of unity for the Church  
certainly a great responsibility  
and today, it weighs heavy  
on the neck of his second stole  
regarding the common course  
of all brothers.

Boarding the aircraft  
for our return, we left behind  
brothers and the white Father  
with dates, tickets and flights  
for all of the dark Continent.  
There to sow the word,  
To do good works, to build  
Faith, often espousing  
alien traditions,  
so that Christ may reach countries  
looted by the insatiability  
of nation dealers.

But, once persecuted  
by the contempt of brothers  
the carefree safety of parishes  
and vacant metropolises  
from inspiration, joy and hope.

Continue your labors, Your Beatitude,  
Pope of nations, cultures, times,  
Having now experienced in Cairo  
This great wonder  
Do not let hesitation stop you.  
God lives and is beside you,  
You witnessed Him illuminating, guiding,  
Opening new and unprecedented  
pathways for you,  
Dare,  
make again the sign of the cross  
and carry on. With your army,  
your children, bishops  
ministering your word,  
your way, your place and your dream,  
without pride,  
all joy, humility and faith.

Via Istanbul we returned to Evros.  
From the City, where the miracle culminates,  
To our Country, where the miracle is fading.  
But Faith goes on and continues to irrigate  
And the Church's miracle continues

Its constant voyage, even when the waves hit the sides of the ship.