

# **RESURRECTION" OF ORTHODOXY IN SOUTH SUDAN – FIRST DIVINE LITURGY IN 38 YEARS**

With the grace of God, the prayer and blessing of His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, Saturday 10 January 2015, saw the laying of the foundation stone By His Eminence Narkissos Metropolitan of Nubia, of the first Missionary Centre in South Sudan, the most newly established state of the world, a highly suffering country which has been plagued by civil war for more than 30 years, with very few periods of ceasefire.

This first Missionary Centre which will operate in the South is dedicated to the Saint Apostle and Evangelist Mark, establisher of the Alexandrian Church. The area where the Missionary effort will be housed and coordinated by His Eminence is in the eastern end of the capital JUBA in MONGALA, 500 metres from the White Nile River.

In his brief address, His Eminence passed on to those present the total love and ceaseless concern of His Beatitude for South Sudan and then went on to praise the few Greeks who, despite all the difficulties and dangers, remained in the region, keeping alight the light the flame of Hellenism and Orthodoxy and prayed that this day would be the beginning of a permanent peace and unity in South Sudan, so that this much-suffering nation could prosper and progress.

On the next day, 11<sup>th</sup> January 2015, after 38 whole years, the Divine Liturgy was served in the Holy Church of St Stylianos in the centre of JUBA by His Eminence Narkissos of Nubia. Much pious emotion and unspeakable joy flooded the few brave Greeks who remain in South Sudan despite the adverse political conditions, and to them His Eminence passed on the prayers of His Beatitude the Patriarch, that 2015 be a year of peace and bring reconciliation and unity to the Nation. Prior to the dismissal, he blessed and shared out the Vasilopita.

On 12 January 2015, His Eminence Narkissos Metropolitan of Nubia and All Sudan, was received by the Minister of Religions in the country, Mr. Moses Telar Cindwt, to whom he emphasized the historic presence and contribution of the Orthodox Church to the area, as well as the will for a continuation of this presence and contribution in the future, as South Sudan is now an independent country. In his

turn, His Excellency the Minister committed the new country to offer every possible facilitation so that the Orthodox Church could succeed in its mission, which the country desperately needs.

Finally, on the next day, God willing, His Eminence will travel to another town of the South, WAU, to come into contact with several Orthodox families which live there, and to serve a liturgy in the Holy Church of the Prophet Elias and to conduct the baptisms of many children who had remained un-baptized due to various difficulties.