

RESURRECTION OF ORTHODOXY IN THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF MAURITANIA

With The Grace of God and the blessings of His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria, His Eminence Meletios Metropolitan of Carthage, paid his first pastoral visit from 29th March to 3rd April 2017, to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, the fourth country of his Province and for the first time after almost a decade he conducted the Divine Liturgy as well as other services and holy sacraments for the small Orthodox flock in that country.

On this important trip, he was accompanied by Fr. Maxim Massaltin from the Russian community of Morocco and by the Very Reverend Archimandrite Konstantinos Koutloumousianos; he was met at the airport of the capital Nouakchott by His Excellency the Ambassador of Russia to Mauritania Mr. Vladimir Chamov together with his Consul Mr. Pavel as well as the Chargé d' Affaires of the Embassy of the European Union in the country, Mr. Serge Maraite who, together with the Ambadressess of France Mrs. Zoe Stefanou and the Lebanese Doctor Hanna Melhem organized the entire visit.

As part of his five-day stay in Mauritania, His Eminence the Metropolitan had the opportunity of gathering the Orthodox Greeks, Cypriots, Russians, Lebanese, Romanian, Belgians and the faithful from various other countries who work and live in the country, to conduct the Service of the Akathist Hymn, the Holy Unction and with the contribution of the above-named priests to hear the confession of the faithful who attended.

The culmination of the Worship gatherings was the Sunday Divine Liturgy on the 2nd April 2017, at a suitably transformed area within the Russian Embassy, in the presence

of the Russian Ambassador Mr. Vladimir Chamov and his Philhellene French counterpart, Mr. Joel Meyer together with his Orthodox family and fifty faithful, who with great emotion attended the Holy Eucharist, partook of Holy Communion after many years and before the end of the Dismissal, everyone with one voice sang the Resurrection Paeon "*Christ is Risen*". Together with the Antidoron, they received pectoral crosses and Icons and attended a festive lunch hosted by the Russian Ambassador.

In conclusion His Eminence the Metropolitan and his entourage of Priests had a meeting with the Catholic Bishop of Nouakchott Mr. Martin, as well as with diplomats who work in Mauritania, and also discussed the possibility of erecting an Orthodox Chapel with contributions from the Russian Embassy, if circumstances allow.