

THE HEART OF ORTHODOXY BEATS STRONGLY IN LUBUMBASHI

On 12th February 2017, **His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa**, conducted the Patriarchal Divine Liturgy at the Holy Cathedral of the Annunciation of the Theotokos, concelebrating with His Eminence Nicephorus Metropolitan of Kinshasa, His Eminence Meletios Metropolitan of Katanga who was celebrating his name day and His Grace Innocent Bishop of Rwanda and Burundi.

During the Divine Liturgy he ordained to the Priesthood a member of the clergy of the Holy Metropolis of Kinshasa, giving him the name Meletios, in honour of Metropolitan Meletios who was celebrating his name day.

Present during the Eucharistic Gathering were the Honorary Consul General of Greece Mr. Gerasimos Dounis representing His Excellency the Ambassador of Greece to Kinshasa Mr. George Papakostas, the Chairman of the Hellenic Community of Lubumbashi Mr. George Psaromatis, Members of the Executive Council of the Hellenic Community, many Clergy, State officials and around 5000 Orthodox Christians, who gave the Alexandrian Primate an enthusiastic welcome. The enthusiasm of the faithful for His Beatitude's visit was evident, and was highly commented on by the local media, which broadcast the Divine Liturgy via live link, featuring the Venerable Primate of the Throne of St Mark as the "Patriarch of Love".

In his homily to the faithful congregation, His Beatitude spoke at length about the Gospel extract of the "Prodigal Son", emphasising the need of constant repentance for every Orthodox Christians, the return of everyone to the always open Paternal home, the Church of Christ, where the Merciful God always awaits those weary and wounded by sin, to give them rest in the bosom of His great love. In conclusion, he thanked all the Orthodox Christians for their welcome and their dedication to Holy and Immaculate Orthodoxy.

Before the end of the dismissal of the Eucharistic Gathering, the Primate, on the occasion of the name day of His Eminence Meletios, Metropolitan of Katanga, as well as of the tenth anniversary of his ordination as Hierarch, awarded him the Supreme Order of St Savvas the Sanctified, expressing his congratulations and his Patriarchal pleasure, for the perfect organization of the Holy Metropolis, which demonstrates his painstaking efforts and continuous monitoring of every are of pastoral activity separately.

His Eminence Meletios replied to His Beatitude saying the following: *"..... I thank you and am wholeheartedly grateful to you for your love, your support and your great paternal embrace, throughout these 10 years of activity in the Local Church of the Congo...Your presence Your Beatitude, has strengthened us, comforted us and supported us spiritually..."* and addressing the people he said aloud *"...Our Father is among us...and he will always be with in our minds as a blessing from God..."*.

Fr Amphilochios, now Metropolitan of New Zealand worked arduously in the field of Missions in the area, followed by Fr Meletios Gregoriatis, now Metropolitan of Katanga, with the blessing of his late spiritual father Fr. George Kapsanis, Abbott of the Monastery of St Gregory on Mount Athos. Since that time the Monastery of St Gregory supports and constantly strengthens the missionary efforts in the Congo.