

# THE PATRIARCH IN ST PETERSBURG

On 5th December 2017, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, with the fraternal blessing of His Most Holiness Kirill Patriarch of Russia and following an invitation by His Eminence Varsonofy Metropolitan of St Petersburg, arrived in the majestic and important city of St Petersburg, to officiate at the festivities in memory of the Great Prince St Alexander Nevsky, at the Lavra of the same name.

His Beatitude was accompanied by His Eminence Meletios Metropolitan of Carthage, His Eminence Archbishop Leonid of Vladikavkaz and Protopresbyter Fr, Viktor Kulanga, Exarch of the Patriarchate of Moscow in Cairo.

On the 6th December, the day of the feast, the Alexandrian Primate conducted a Patriarchal Divine Liturgy in the Church of the Holy Trinity which was full of faithful Christians, within the Lavra of St Alexander Nevsky, together with Their Eminences the Metropolitans Varsonofy of St Petersburg and Latoga, Meletios of Carthage, the Archbishops Leonid of Vladikavkaz and Ambrose of Peterhof, the Bishops Nazarius of Kronstadt Abbot of the Lavra and Ignatios of Armavir.

The Divine Liturgy was attended by the Honorable Consul General of Greece in St Petersburg Mr. Panos Beglitis, as well as hundreds of faithful, who ignored the snow and the polar temperatures prevailing in the area.

Prior to the dismissal, His Beatitude received the kind and courteous words from the local Metropolitan Varsonofy, and in his reply, expressed to the enormous congregation his emotions on visiting the region again, after thirty years. He then awarded the Superior Commander of St Savvas the Sanctified to

Metropolitan Varsonofy.

He then attended the Monastic table, and immediately thereafter visited the adjacent Theological Academy, where he spoke to the 370 students about the missionary efforts of the Patriarchate of Alexandria on the African Continent, the difficulties as well as the joy of preaching the Word of God to the indigenous people. During his talk, a video was screened of the missionary travels of the Patriarch to Kenya, and he addressed an invitation to the students to participate in missionary journeys in Africa, mimicking the great Russian missionaries of Alaska, Germanos and Innocent Veniaminov.

Finally, His Beatitude was shown the resplendent Churches of the Virgin "of Kazan", the Saviour Christ "on blood" and St Isaak, admiring their splendor and architecture.

In the evening of the same day he paid a visit to His Excellency the Governor of St Petersburg, Mr. Georgy Sergeyevich Poltavchenko.