

THE PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA IN SOUTH-EAST KENYA

His Beatitude Theodoros II Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and all Africa arrived in the city of Kisumu, which is located on the shores of Lake Victoria, on the morning of Tuesday, November 24, 2020. Kisumu is the capital of Nianza Province, famous for its wilderness and the Impala and Zebra Shelters. The Diocese is located in Kisumu.

At the airport, His Beatitude was welcomed by His Grace Markos, Bishop of Kisumu, the representative of the Governor of the Province, the Police Director of the city, Archimandrite Fr. Apostolos, the nuns of the Holy Monastery of Panagia Tricherousa, African priests and many faithful.

The Patriarch immediately headed to the See of the Diocese, where the usual Doxology was sung and speeches were made. The Bishop of Kisumu welcomed the Alexandrian Primate and thanked him for defying the pandemic and including in his pastoral visit Southeastern Kenya. His Beatitude expressed his joy that the Apostle Mark led his steps to Kisumu for the 4th time, recalling the first time he visited the city in 1994 accompanying the then Patriarch Parthenios.

He referred to Bishop Athanasios who passed away so early in life and now he comes to visit another of his spiritual children, a native of Africa, Bishop Markos, who is distinguished for his love of monasticism, his meekness, his simplicity and his philanthropy, emphasizing that he is a worthy member of the clergy who was nurtured in the seat of the Patriarchate and it is his experience that will establish him as a Missionary and a Shepherd.

His Beatitude then met with the holy clergy of the Diocese, numbering about 80 clergy, gave paternal advice and instructions and discussed with them, issues related to their missionary activities, emphasizing, among other things, that they are authentic children of the Alexandrian Church and should be proud that they draw their canonical correctness from the Ancient Patriarchate of Alexandria and all Africa that was, is and will always be by their side. His Beatitude then went to the tomb of the blessed Bishop Athanasios and sang a trisagion.

The Patriarch then went to the Diocese, blessed the premises and in the Chapel of the Diocese, deeply moved, sang the trisagion for the repose of the soul of the late Metropolitan Petros of Caesarea (formerly Aksum). Addressing those present, His Beatitude referred to the great personality of the late Hierarch and Elder Metropolitan, who served the Patriarchate for many decades from the position of Patriarchal Commissioner of Cairo, the Metropolitan of Aksum, the locum tenens of the Throne and the representative in Athens. With tears in his eyes he spoke of the day the Metropolitan gave him the keys to the Patriarchate and the Patriarchal tiara on the day of his enthronement.

Finally, His Beatitude distributed gifts to the priests and food to the women and the priests' wives, who in an atmosphere of joy sang African hymns to thank their Patriarch for the gifts.

Afterwards, the Alexandrian Primate went to the Holy Monastery of Panagia Tricherousa, where he was warmly welcomed by the spiritual father and founder of the Monastery, Fr Apostolos, the Abbess Mother Anthusa and her nuns. In the Monastery Chapel prayers were sung for the arrival of the Patriarch followed by Vespers for the Feast of St Catherine.

His Beatitude spoke about the life of the Alexandrian Saint and thanked Fr Apostolos and his brothers who left their homeland of Crete and settled in the depths of central Africa to bear witness to Christ and help their fellow human

beings.

Afterwards, the Patriarch visited the under construction sites of the Monastery, blessed the good works of the fraternity and prayed that the inauguration day would come soon. He also visited the Orthodox Schools adjacent to the Monastery and spoke paternally to the students of the last grade of High School who are preparing for their final exams, giving them hope for tomorrow and for a new beginning that will come after the pandemic.

Finally, refreshments were offered in the humble guest lounge and thus the program of the day was completed with so many blessings and unique experiences, life experiences, missionary experiences, experiences of the early Christian era.

Accompanying the Patriarch on his visit to Kisumu were Their Eminences Elder Metropolitan Makarios of Nairobi and George of Guinea as well as Their Graces Neophytos Bishop of Nyeri and Sylvester Bishop of Gulu.