

## **THE PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA IN THE MOROCCAN CAPITAL RABAT**

On Monday 23 March 2015, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa continued his pastoral visit to Morocco in the capital, Rabat. IN the morning, together with his entourage, he visited the Mohamed V Mausoleum, where he laid a wreath of honour, as is custom, on the tombs of the Kings Mohamed V and Hasan II.

He then received at the Ambassadorial Residence of the Greek Ambassador Mr. Platon Alexios Hatzimihalis the visit of the Minister of Religious and Islamic Affairs (Habous), His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Toufiqand, and the Minister of Culture His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Amine Sbini. With these two high ranking members of the Moroccan Government he discussed, in a very cordial climate, issues of common interest, and presented the history and works of the Patriarchate through the ages. Attending the official lunch were all the Orthodox Ambassadors in Morocco, the Catholic Archbishop Mgr Vincent Landel and the Chief Rabbi of Rabat Mr. Joseph Israel.

In the afternoon he went to the Royal Palace where he was welcomed by His Excellency the Prime Minister of the country, Mr. Abdelilah Benkirane. The discussion between the two men was held in a particularly warm atmosphere. On behalf of the King the Prime Minister welcomed the Head of the Orthodox Church on the African Continent and praised the philanthropic and multicultural presence of the Orthodox Patriarchate throughout Africa. He emphasized that in the Kingdom of Morocco too under the protection of God and the direction of the King, Moroccans move within the framework of freedom of Religion and respect among the three monotheistic Religions and the peoples of varying traditions. His Beatitude expressed his gratification for the welcome and on behalf of His Majesty. The two men reached the conclusion for the necessity of prayer by everyone for the prevalence of the peace of God and for the resistance of extremism, which lately has spread both in Europe and in Africa.

His Beatitude then went on to visit the Russian language Orthodox Church of the Resurrection, where he was warmly welcomed, as a children's choir sang hymns and songs, as did all the parishioners.

The day ended with a visit and dinner at the ambassadorial residence of His Excellency the Ambassador of Russia Mr. Valery Vorovief, and old acquaintance from seventeen years previously from Africa (Cameroon-Chad), together with Their Excellencies the Ambassadors of Egypt Mr. Ahmed Gamal el Din and Greece Mr. Platon Alexios Hatzimihalis, the local Metropolitan and the rest of the members of his entourage.