

THIRD DAY OF HIS BEATITUDE'S VISIT TO RUSSIA

His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, extended an invitation to His Beatitude Alexios II of Moscow and All Russia to visit the Patriarchate of Alexandria during the Patriarchal concelebration at the Holy Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Lavra Radonezh, in which many bishops of the Russian Church participated and many faithful Christians attended.

This Liturgical Synaxis was conducted on the occasion of the third anniversary of the elevation of His Beatitude Theodoros II to the Apostolic and Patriarchal Throne of St Mark. " I am very happy to be in Russia again after twelve years...I lived here for ten years as Patriarchal Exarch in Odessa and the 9th October is a great day for me as on that day I will have completed three years since my election as Patriarch. I thank God, I thank St Sergius of Rhadonezh, for bringing me here today as Primate of the missionary Patriarchate of Alexandria, to be with His Holiness Alexios II, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia whom I have known for many years and loved and respected. I came to express the brotherly relations which have remained during the historic paths between the two Churches of Alexandria and Russia...In a world which today is shaken, we need peace, unity of nations and churches. So, from this position, I wish His Beatitude many years, many years to both nations of Russia and Greece...and I further express my gratitude to the country in which I live and move freely, Egypt".

His Beatitude Alexios II, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia expressed his great joy at the visit of His Beatitude: "Our joy is doubled too for the fact that today, in

celebrating the Feast of St Sergius of Rhadonezh, we have the great honour to have with us leading the Divine Liturgy, Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, with whom I have bonds of friendship going back many years...The presence of the Alexandrian Primate in Moscow is an example of tightening and strengthening of the relations between churches".

His Beatitude also praised the spiritual heritage of the ancient Patriarchate of Alexandria. "The Orthodox people of Russia has always shown huge respect to the glorious Orthodox Church of Alexandria, a church which was grounded o the teachings of the Apostle Mark, glorified by the famous teachers of the Alexandrian Theological School and was praised by the struggles of many of the saints of our church, some of whom set the foundations of Orthodox monasticism".

Immediately following the Divine Liturgy the two Primates conducted the doxology for the Feast of St Sergius, whose relics are to be found in one of the Holy Chapels of the Lavra.