

Patriarch of Alexandria visited Metropolis of Nigeria in Lagos



On Wednesday, 7 February 2024, His Beatitude Patriarch Theodore II of Alexandria and All Africa flew to Lagos, the commercial capital of Nigeria. At the airport, he was greeted by the clergy of Eastern Nigeria and the CEO of the A. G. Leventis family group of companies. In the afternoon, the Patriarch visited several Greek businesses, including Coca Cola, Mandylas, Pick & Pay, and Art Cafe Gallery by Alexis.

The next day, the Patriarch went to the Cathedral of the Resurrection of the Lord where he was welcomed by the clergy of the Holy Metropolis of Nigeria (Nigeria, Tongo & Benin). Following the Doxology, the Patriarch performed a Trisagion service for the repose of the soul of the late Metropolitan of Nigeria, Alexandros.

After the conclusion of the Trisagion service, the Patriarch spoke with emotion about the late Hierarch, recalling their long-standing personal friendship since their student years and the significant contributions made by the late Metropolitan to the work of the Patriarchate in South Africa, Alexandria, and during his last 26 years in Nigeria. He emphasised the growth of this work, which was built upon the foundations established by the late Metropolitan of Accra (later Carthage and

Pelusium), Irineos Talavekos.

His Eminence Metropolitan Georgios of Guinea, acting as locum tenens, warmly welcomed the Patriarch, expressing gratitude that despite the Patriarch's numerous commitments in Egypt and the impending convocation of the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate, he chose to be present with his flock in Nigeria. This visit, after twelve years, was deeply appreciated as it boosted the morale of both clergy and congregants and offered solace for the loss of their Metropolitan.

Addressing his clergy from Nigeria, Tongo, and Benin, as well as the Presidents of the Orthodox Communities of Tongo and Benin, and representatives of youth associations, the Patriarch spoke with love and paternal affection. He addressed the challenges of the times and emphasised the Patriarchate's mission to uphold Orthodoxy throughout Africa, underlining its canonical authority. He urged everyone to remain faithful to the true God and cautioned against external influences seeking to undermine the work of humble Greek missionaries who prioritised the salvation of souls over nationalism.

His Beatitude praised their contributions to alleviating poverty and disease, urging continued dedication to serving African brothers and sisters. The Patriarch's meeting with his spiritual children lasted several hours, during which he provided guidance and instructions on continuing the Patriarchate's work in the significant and vast country. He set forth guidelines to ensure the success of their endeavors, emphasising the importance of their ongoing efforts in upholding Orthodoxy and serving the people.

On Friday morning, 9 February 2024, the Patriarch attended a working breakfast with Anastasios, Louisa Leventi, and their partners in Nigeria, and discussed with them issues related to the presence of the Patriarchate in Lagos and Abuja. He then spoke with Greek entrepreneurs who are actively operating within the country. It's worth mentioning that Greek companies in Nigeria hold a prominent position among foreign businesses operating in the country, playing a pivotal role in driving its economic development and contributing significantly to its GDP growth. He also met members of the Lebanese (Antiochian) Orthodox Community.

At noon, the Patriarch hosted a lunch for all his clergy, graciously provided by Lana Mandylas, and offered church gifts to all the clergy, offered by the Panhellenic Association of the Orthodox Mission of Kypseli and the Inter-Orthodox Missionary Centre "Porefthentes."

Late in the afternoon, the Patriarch visited the largest ghetto in the city and

distributed food to the poor and the homeless.

Finally, on the occasion of the memorial day of the national poet Dionysios Solomos and the International Day of the Greek Language, the Patriarch announced that Nigeria will soon have its own Greek School and chair of Hellenic Studies at the State University.



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