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Xanthi welcomes Patriarch of Alexandria for solemn Lenten Service



With deep emotion and prayerful reverence, the city of Xanthi welcomed His Beatitude Pope and Patriarch Theodoros II of Alexandria on Sunday, 1 March 2026. The Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa presided at the Lenten Vespers service held at the Cathedral of Holy Wisdom, in an atmosphere marked by devotion and spiritual uplift.

Patriarch Theodoros, who is especially beloved in Thrace and particularly in Xanthi, has deep roots in the region, as he hails from the village of Dafnonas in Xanthi. His presence in his native land stirred strong emotions among the faithful, who filled the Cathedral to overflowing in order to see him, receive his blessing, and participate in the solemn service. The church was packed, reflecting both the affection of the local community and the spiritual significance of the occasion at the outset of Great Lent.

Accompanying the Patriarch were Their Eminences Metropolitan George of Guinea, Metropolitan Nikodimos of Memphis, and His Grace Bishop Damaskinos of Mareotis, whose participation added particular solemnity and splendour to the evening service.

Following the Vespers, Archimandrite Fr. Michael Santorineos, preacher of the Holy

Metropolis of Thessaloniki, delivered a spiritual address entitled “Orthodoxy Through Miracles.” In his homily, he offered reflections and spiritual insights in preparation for Holy and Great Lent, encouraging the faithful to deepen their faith and commitment during this sacred season.

In a symbolic and heartfelt gesture, Patriarch Theodoros presented a censer as a gift to the Cathedral, expressing his love and respect for the local Church and its shepherd. The offering was received as a visible sign of his enduring bond with his homeland and its faithful.

After the conclusion of the service, a luncheon was held in his honour at the Xanthi Officers’ Club. There, the Patriarch had the opportunity to meet local authorities, representatives of institutions, and once again members of his extended family from Xanthi, in a warm and deeply moving setting.

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