

Divine Liturgy after 40 years in Keren, Eritrea



The Divine Liturgy was celebrated, after about 40 years, in the Holy Church of the Holy Forerunner and John the Baptist, in the second largest city of the State of Eritrea, in Keren.

According to the old calendar followed by the country of Eritrea, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross was celebrated and attended by clergy representatives of the Eritrean Patriarchate, Keren Diocese, and believers from the region.

The inhabitants of the city were moved, they heard after more than half a century, the bell of the “Church of the Greeks” ringing again, which they have loved and guarded for decades, waiting for a priest to officiate. Their prayer and anticipation took place yesterday, Wednesday, September 27, 2023, a day that will go down in history.

The Keren Greek Community was founded in 1896 and since then the presence of

the Patriarchate of Alexandria and all Africa, through the Holy Metropolis of Aksum, has existed until today. The late Vlasios Frangoulis founded a small parish, the Holy Church, and the elementary school, which are preserved. Another famous Greek was Praxitelis Kyriakakis, from the village of Melitini in Sparta, who lived and worked hard there, as well as many other Presidents of the Community and members, from many parts of Greece.

The Eritrean Greek Community, in the first post-war decades, came to count around 400 members. However, during the 1970s, due to major changes, political and economic, it received key blows. Today it consists of a small number of Greeks, who remain “sacred and faithful” to their traditions.

After the first visit of His Eminence Metropolitan Daniel of Aksum to Eritrea, in October 2022, the way was opened for the second one to take place these days, consisting of Archimandrite Stefanos Katiforis, Assoc. Professor of the Ionian University Dr. Christos Karydis, the expatriate from Eritrea Mr. Lambros Kyriakakos and Mr. Vasilios Giannopoulos.

Daily Worship in our Churches, meetings, and conferences with the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Eritrea for the initiation of cooperation in matters of education, training, preservation, recording, and maintenance of the cultural heritage of the country, visits and reinforcement of Holy Monasteries, educational seminars at the Theological School, meetings with government and local leaders, reunification and support with new members of the Greek Parish, provision of scholarships for studies in educational institutions in Greece, the establishment of a Cultural Heritage Conservation Laboratory at the Eritrean Patriarchate under the supervision and auspices of the Environment Department of the Ionian University, are a few from the offered actions of the Patriarchate of Alexandria and the Holy Metropolis of Aksum to the pious people of Eritrea.

The delegations were officially invited by the Tewahdo Patriarchate of Eritrea, they participated in the magnificent Feast of the Holy Cross (Meskel) in the centre of Asmara, with the presence of all the Members of the Holy Synod under Archbishop Loukas and were subsequently received with an official ceremony in the Patriarchal Palace, where gifts were offered and matters of further cooperation were discussed in detail.

The ten-day visit of the delegation of the Holy Metropolis of Aksum will further strengthen the historical religious, and cultural ties of the two Patriarchates (Alexandria and Eritrea) and will contribute to the cooperation of the two Nations, Greece and Eritrea, which have existed since the 4th century, by Saint Athanasios











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