

01/12/2023

Patriarch of Alexandria: “Egypt is the crown of Africa and Burundi is a precious diamond of Central Africa”



The ongoing missionary visit of the Patriarch of Alexandria to the Republic of Burundi and the Holy Metropolis of Burundi and Rwanda continues to be a source of profound significance.

On Tuesday morning, 28 November 2023, a vibrant atmosphere filled the air as the official Doxology and reception of His Beatitude Pope and Patriarch Theodoros of Alexandria and All Africa took place at the Cathedral of the Dormition of the Holy Theotokos in Bujumbura. This monumental occasion was graced by the presence of Their Eminences, Metropolitan Innocentios of Burundi and Rwanda, Metropolitan Daniel of Axum, and His Grace Bishop Sylvester of Eastern Uganda.

Amidst the warm reception offered by the local Holy Clergy and Orthodox faithful, a joyous procession commenced. Following the official Doxology, Metropolitan Innocentios of Burundi and Rwanda conveyed immense delight at the Patriarch's visit. The Metropolitan extended gratitude to the Honorary Consul of Greece, the President of the Greek Community of Bujumbura, clergy, and people for the heartwarming welcome bestowed upon the spiritual father of the African Orthodox community.

The Metropolitan's words resonated with gratitude: "Today, the Orthodox Church of Burundi rejoices, our Holy Metropolis rejoices, the Greek Community rejoices, and the devout Orthodox faithful praise God for the arrival of His Beatitude, the successor of the Evangelist Mark, our Father and Shepherd Patriarch Theodoros of Alexandria and all Africa."

Expressing his gratitude, His Beatitude Patriarch Theodoros thanked President Évariste Ndayishimiye of the Republic of Burundi for the warm reception. He expressed his visit's purpose: to nurture and fortify his spiritual children, clergy, and people, while also drawing strength from their presence.

He continued, praising both Egypt and Burundi, likening Egypt to the crown of Africa and acknowledging Burundi as a precious diamond of Central Africa. He emphasised the nation's resilience through past challenges and highlighted the collective strength in spreading Christian virtues of love and patience. Patriarch Theodore prayed for the country's progress and prosperity, envisioning further consolidation of the Orthodox faith within Burundi.

Following these ceremonies, the Patriarch moved to the new Episcopate's administrative centre, performing the Small Sanctification of the Waters and Official Opening services, rejoicing in this milestone achievement for the Local Church, made possible by the significant contribution of the Greek Community of Bujumbura.

Additionally, the Patriarch visited the Offices of the Greek Community of Bujumbura, engaging in fruitful discussions with Consul of Greece Mr. Georgios Koukoulis and community members. The day concluded with the Patriarch attending a reception hosted by the Egyptian Ambassador to Burundi, Mr. Yasser Elatawi.

Continuing his journey on Wednesday, 29 November 2023, the Alexandrian Patriarch ventured beyond the city, visiting the Gihanga Community. There, he consecrated the Church of Saints Athanasius the Great and John the Theologian in Gihunge, announcing plans for a school and clinic to cater to the Community's educational and medical needs. The Patriarch expressed gratitude to Patriarch Daniel of Romania, Priests Fr. Daniel and Fr. Victor, and Metropolitan Innocentios for their dedicated assistance to the Holy Metropolis of Burundi.

The day concluded as the Patriarch presided over the Great Vespers Service, commemorating the feast of the Holy Apostle Andrew the First-Called at the Cathedral of the Dormition of the Theotokos.

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