

## **FIRST PASTORAL VISIT TO GABON BY HIS GRACE THE BISHOP OF BRAZZAVILLE**

**With the paternal prayers and blessings of His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria, His Grace Panteleimon, Bishop of Brazzaville and Gabon, paid his first pastoral visit to Gabon from 14th to 17th January 2014.**

His Grace arrived in the capital, Libreville, accompanied by the Reverend Protopresbyter Maximos Oumba, Hierarchal Vicar General of the Holy Diocese. During his three day stay he met with His Excellency Mr Dimitri Kurakov, Ambassador of Russia to Gabon, who is an old friend from his years as consul in Alexandria; he also met with the Honorable Mr Momcilo Radunovic Mombo, a business man, honorary Consul of Serbia as well as with His Eminence Basil, Catholic Archbishop of Libreville, adviser for religious issues to the Minister of Security of the country for ecclesiastical communities.

On 16th January His Grace met with His Excellency the Minister of Security Mr. Aime-Popa N'tzoutsi Mouyama, in order to discuss and to legally sort out the issue of the official recognition of the Orthodox Church in the Republic of Gabon, as well as the building of the first Orthodox Church in the capital.

During his stay in Libreville, His Grace also had the opportunity of meeting with the first indigenous Orthodox Christians, as well as with the other Russian, Serbian and Lebanese faithful, who comprise the Christian flock of the local Church.

With no Church available, he baptised ten newly-enlightened Orthodox Christians in the home of Honorary Consul of Serbia, followed by a Divine Liturgy. In the early hours of 17th January, His Grace returned by air to the See of the Diocese in Pointe-Noire, Congo.