

INAUGURATION OF THE FIRST ORTHODOX CHURCH IN NORTHERN CONGO AND ORDINATION OF A PRIEST

On Sunday 5th February 2017, the inauguration of the newly-erected Holy Parish Church of the Holy Forerunner – St Nicholas was performed with solemnity and spiritual euphoria in the town of Impfondo in the northern Congo, by His Grace Panteleimon, Bishop of Congo-Brazzaville and Gabon.

The inaugurated Church, of which the foundation was done by His Grace on 21st November 2013, is the first Orthodox Church built in the north of the country to serve the general Liturgical and spiritual life and progress of the Orthodox parish community of the border town of Impfondo, which includes the Bantu tribe and the much vaunted race of the Pygmies – one of the oldest tribes known to mankind – and a springboard for the further development of Orthodoxy in the broader region.

Immediately following the inauguration, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated during which the ordination to the Priesthood of the married Deacon Timothy Ndzebe took place. In his address, the Bishop spoke of the importance and the enormous responsibility of the ministry of the Holy Altar and of the faithful, in a spirit of humility, love and prudence. He also spoke of the importance of the event of the establishment of the first Orthodox Parish in the northern part of the noble country of Congo-Brazzaville.

Also addressing the first Parish Priest of the Church, Fr. Timothy, he gave paternal advice and guidance, conveying the love of His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, with whose blessing the holy inauguration and ordination were done. Finally, he expressed the gratitude of the local Church and himself to the “St Cosmas the Aetolian” Missionary Association of Thessaloniki, through whose funding the Church was built, and thanked the Secretary General of the Likouala Prefecture, the Member of Parliament for the Likouala district Mr. Jean-Marie Batheas, the Mayor of the town of Impfondo Mr. Clotaire Maniobo, the Vice-President of the Regional Council of Likouala Mrs. Ephrasie Dolama, the Deputy Director of the Police Administration and the representatives of other Christian denominations for their honourable presence.

In the afternoon of the same day he had a lengthy meeting with the Parish Priest and the members of the Parish Council of the the Holy Forerunner – St Nicholas, together with the participation of the Very reverend Fr. Maximos Oumba, Hierarchal Vicar and Ekonomos Fr. Sergios Mabelemo (who were accompanying His Grace from his arrival in Impfondo on 1st February) regarding the new pastoral path of the Parish.

On the next day, 6th February, His Grace the Bishop of Congo-Brazzaville attended the Divine Liturgy at the inaugurated Church, after which he signed the sacred antemensia and departed by air for Pointe-Noire, via the capital, Brazzaville.