

Pastoral and Missionary Visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to the Republic of the Congo

By the Grace of Christ our Savior, and with the blessing of His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian, who is ailing, His Grace, Bishop Ambrose of Methone made yet another lengthy (July 4-24, 2012 [Old Style]) and particularly arduous missionary journey to the Congo, which journey was richly blessed by our Lord.

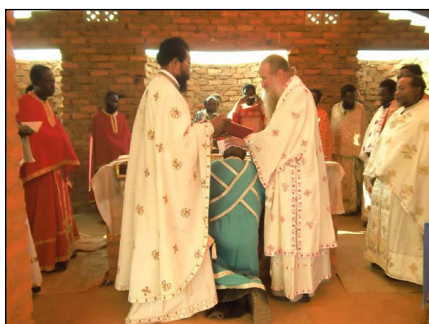
The first stop on the visit was Kinshasa, the capital of the Congo, where Bishop Ambrose arrived by air, via Paris. Here he was met by Father Léonide Kaseya and a group of faithful from developing communities in northern Congo.

His Grace then flew to Kananga, where the majority of our mission's clergy and laypeople live. He was given a warm reception at the monastery that our mission is building, held gatherings with the clergy and with three novice monks, met with many faithful in order to provide them with spiri-





tual and material support, and held meetings with local organizations for the regulation of pertinent matters. The liturgical schedule was especially intensive, with Divine Liturgies at several of our Churches. During these Liturgies, Deacon Father Jean Ntambue and Deacon Father Paul Balejawalelu were ordained to the Priesthood and Symphorien Kalubi, Maxime Tshienda, and Diodore Kazumba were ordained to the Diaconate, in order that they might help cover the needs of distant parishes in the region.



Bishop Ambrose then made the terribly difficult drive to Mbuji-Mayi (covering 190 kilometers in eleven hours!), where he met with the region's few clergy and many faithful. During Divine Liturgies celebrated at various Churches in the area, he ordained Deacon Father Cyrille Ntambue and Prodrome Tshibanga to the Priesthood, and Antipas Beya and Paul Tshishikedi to the Diaconate.



He then flew back to Kinshasa and crossed the river into Brazzaville, the capital of the Republic of the Congo. Bishop Ambrose visited the Church of St. George, where he also celebrated the Divine Liturgy; the building plot, which was recently bought with contributions



from our faithful in Greece, and where a new Church dedicated to the Annunciation of the *Theotokos* is already in progress; and the grounds where a school and future monastery are to be built. His Grace met with our Priests in this region and numerous faithful.

Finally, back in Kinshasa, at the Church of the Venerable Forerunner, Bishop Ambrose ordained four Priests (Emmanuel Swato, Claude Mbombimba, Julien Ebhinba, and Prodrome Ndama) and one Deacon (Étienne



Baiboma) from among the group of faithful that came down from northern Congo, following intensive catechism and formation in matters of the Faith and the Priesthood. His Grace also baptized an adult Catechumen and visited our St. Cyprian School, where a festal program was held in his honor.



After making arrangements for various works that need to be done within our mission and depositing the necessary sum to cover the expenses thereof, and physically exhausted from the unbelievable (by European standards) hardships, discomforts, and ailments suffered during the journey, Bishop Ambrose returned to Greece with thanksgiving to our Lord for the strengthening and success of the Divine sowing in the distant field of the Congo, in Central Africa!

