

Santa Sede

On Wednesday, February 21, 2001, His Holiness Pope John Paul II held, in St. Peter's Square, an Ordinary Public Consistory for the creation of new cardinals. The Holy Father arrived at the portico of the basilica, where the cardinals were already gathered, at 10:30 a.m. and immediately took his seat. After the liturgical greeting, the Holy Father read the formula for the creation of the cardinals and proclaimed their names, among which was that of **Stéphanos II Ghattas, C.M.**, Patriarch of Alexandria for Copts (Egypt). Then, the first of the cardinals, Giovanni Battista Re, gave a warm greeting of gratitude. After the homily, the Pope conferred the biretta on the new cardinals and assigned to each one his own Title or Deaconry. The ceremony concluded with the apostolic blessing.

Cardinal **Stéphanos II Ghattas, C.M.**, Patriarch of Alexandria for Copts (Egypt), was born on January 16, 1920 in Sheikh Zein-el-Dine, eparchy of Sohag of the Copts (Egypt). He entered the minor seminary in Cairo in August 1929 and did his classical studies at the Jesuits' Holy Family High School. In September 1938, he was sent to the Pontifical Athenaeum "de Propaganda Fide" in Rome where he obtained a doctorate in philosophy and theology. He was ordained to the priesthood in Rome on March 25, 1944.

He began his pastoral ministry as a philosophy and dogmatic theology professor at the major seminary in Tahta (Egypt). On October 2, 1952, he entered the Congregation of the Mission and made his novitiate in Paris. After working for six years in Lebanon, he was named econome and then superior of our community in Alexandria.

The Coptic Catholic Synod elected him Bishop of Thebes-Luxor on May 8, 1967. He was ordained to the episcopate on June 9 of that year. He remained in this see until February 24, 1984, completing the construction of the bishop's residence.

On that date he was named Apostolic Administrator of the Patriarchate to substitute for the ailing Patriarch Stéphanos I Sidarous, C.M., Patriarch of Alexandria for Copts. After the latter resigned, the Coptic Catholic Synod unanimously elected the former as Patriarch of Alexandria for Copts on June 9, 1986. John Paul II granted him "ecclesiastical communion" on the 23rd of the same month. He then changed his name from Andraos to Stéphanos II, as a gesture of affection for his predecessor.

At present, he governs the eparchy of Alexandria for the Copts, depending on the patriarchate. He is President of the Synod of the Coptic Catholic Church and of the Assembly of the Egyptian Catholic Hierarchy and, in the Roman Curia, member of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches and the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts.

In February 2000, he welcomed the Holy Father during his Jubilee pilgrimage to Mount Sinai.

(Cf. *L'Osservatore Romano*,

February 22, 2001)